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Tales from the Caddy Shack

The Memoirs of John W. McDonough as a Caddy at the Rutland Country Club in the 1930s



ANGELA HINCHEY

This photo of the caddies in front of the caddy shack was probably taken in the late 1920s. Only Charlie Chapleau, who is the sixth boy (left to right) in the back row, can be identified.

Glossary

Some unusual terms relating to caddying and a suggestion of their meaning:

Bag insurance = Ball stolen

Blue Hole = Deep part of East Creek opposite tenth green

Dimer = Ten cent tip

Dog = Ball cut to rubber

Double up = Carry two bags

Down the road = Kicked off the course

Engaged = Good loop lined up for the next day

Greeder = Hungry kid looking for food or guy watching parking lot

Greenhorn = New kid rookie

Half a loop = Nine holes

Hootaladels = Non existent thing (part of hazing)

Lonesome = Single player

Loop = Full 18 holes

Next up = In line for a job

On the nose = No tip

Out 'n downer = Out of town guest

Over the hill = Ride home, usually up Field Avenue

Pearlie = Nice uncut ball

Shag job = Chase balls for pro

Shoulder killer = Heavy bag with thin strap

Trunk = Heavy golf bag

Twosome = Two players

Your turn in the hole = Turn to be thrown into Blue Hole

About the Author

John McDonough was a lifetime resident of Rutland with the exception of time in college and the U.S. Navy during WW II. He was educated at Mt. St. Joseph Academy, Dartmouth College and the University of Vermont. He had 30 years of service in the U.S. Postal Service and in 1979 became postmaster in North Clarendon. John was a 50-year member of the Rutland Country Club. He was Secretary from 1948 to 1960. In 1961 he became President. He was Executive Director of the Vermont Golf Association from 1949 to 1975 and the first director of the Vermont Professional Golf Association from 1976 to 1988. His highest honor as a golfer was runner-up to the 1963 Vermont State Amateur Champion. John was a member of the Rutland Historical Society for 20 years.

John died on 30 January 2001 at age 79, the day after completing this *Quarterly*. He is survived by his wife, Loyola, of Rutland.

Tales from the Caddy Shack

by
John W. McDonough

An exciting first day at the caddy shack

It was the worst of times for some people, but perhaps for other people it was the best of times. It was the decade of the 1930s - to be exact it was 1931 to 1938 and when you read this account of how things were for a young lad of ten as he learned to be a caddy, you may decide for yourself whether it was the “best” or the “worst” of times.

I was ten, almost eleven years old, when my mother allowed my two older brothers to take me with them to the Rutland Country Club in hopes of getting a job as a caddy. Using “shanks’ mare”, walking from Killington Avenue to the North Grove Street golf club seems like a very long way, but the excitement of new adventure was strong enough to make it worth the effort. I found out that many of the caddies walking north on Grove Street would take a break, sit on the wall by the Crestwood Hotel [now Rutland’s Junior High School] and hope to get a ride. After arriving at the large clubhouse and walking down the yellow dirt road past the superintendent’s house and the large equipment barn we came to the caddy shack. This experience has remained in my memory now for seventy years.

The shack had large barn doors - always open. One third of the inside of the shack was devoted to a very strong wire cage where the “Head Caddy” was master of all things. Inside the cage was a sound-powered phone that brought messages from the pro shop as to how many caddies were needed from each class. [Caddies were assigned to A, B or C classes according to their experience.]



RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Rutland Country Club viewed from the west in the late 1930s.

The head caddy also sold sodas and candy bars to both the caddies and golfers making the turn after the ninth hole. The top of the cage held the brown bag lunches brought by the caddies - usually just a sandwich. Along the west side of the interior of the shack was a bench that ran the length of the building. A coffee can, nailed up high on the west wall, served as a basket for basketball played with a tennis ball.

Just to the east of the building was a horseshoe pit. It was a regulation size pit and some of the caddies had great ability at this game. About the best were Irv Gelvan and Maury Roberge. Often they tossed a ringer on top of a ringer.

The approach of golfers to the ninth green or towards the third tee would curtail the game immediately with just a word from the caddymaster. Part way up the little knoll towards the eighteenth fairway was a large bench set between two trees. This was the resting place of the waiting caddies. The area around the shack was well maintained and the caddymaster saw that it was well policed.

My first caddy job

It was 1931 and I was probably the smallest kid at the shack that year. This was understandable since many of the people looking for a job caddying were grown men and others were high school graduates. When the sound-powered phone rang it was usually a call to send up either class A or B caddies to the pro shop for loops. Occasionally the message was for a "C" to take a shag job. This meant that the Pro was going to give a lesson to a new golfer and needed a boy to pick up the shag balls, or that some player wanted to hit a bag of balls to sharpen his game. The shag job was very easy, usually on or near the putting green. On other occasions, for full shots, there was a practice tee between the first and second fairways. The pay was usually a quarter unless you lost some of the shag balls. One of my first days at the shack the phone rang and the head caddy called for ten "C"s to go up to the pro shop. We raced up the road only to have the golf pro tell us to pick up all the papers and cigarette butts around the area.

During the first year there were many days when there were no jobs, especially for a small class C boy. However, early in my second week I was sent up for a loop. It turned out to be a "half a loop" for a little old lady with a small bag containing about six clubs. We headed for the first tee as a "lonesome" or single player. She showed me the way around the front nine and we had a nice time. Finishing the ninth hole my player had me sit on the bench in front of the tennis court while she went to her nearby home to get my pay. She returned with a quarter and a cup cake. Believe me this was very well received. I was on my way to becoming a caddy.

Initiation – welcome to "Blue Hole"

At home that evening, my brother told me that the next day I was to be initiated. Sure enough, midway through the morning one of the older boys announced that "the creek was up". Patch Dam was partially open and a nice flow

of water filled East Creek. Some of the older boys herded me, and a couple of other new kids, down the yellow road towards the red high-sided equipment bridge that crosses the creek in the middle of the tenth hole. As we started across the bridge I broke into a run and hurried up the path north to the edge of "Blue Hole." I had on old clothes and shoes and jumped in - possibly spoiling the lads' pleasure of tossing me in, but they settled for the fact that I was initiated. I was told that a few years later it became the task of those to be initiated to cut sods that were then thrown at them as they floated down the creek at "Blue Hole."

Fun and action around the shack

There were many days when caddies did not get a loop, but time did not hang heavy for there was much to keep young kid active. If you were not on the "next up" list of caddies to get a loop, you could go swimming in "Blue Hole"; swing on the vines over the creek on the edge of the tenth hole; play coffee can basketball in the shack; pitch horseshoes just outside; try your skill at mumblety-peg with a knife on the caddy bench; hunt golf balls on the course or pitch pennies (if you had any) in the shack. There was "no gambling" in the caddy shack, but on occasions a group would gather in the pines just to the left of the tenth green or on the cross-over gate leading to Patch Dam to risk their luck.

On a day when you were fairly sure that you were not going to be called to work, you might take an exploring trip down across the red high-sided equipment bridge past the thirteenth and sixteenth holes and find the trail leading up to Rocky and Muddy Ponds. This trail at one time was called the Stage Coach Road and went all the way to Proctor Village.

In the late summer months, the remaining trees of the John Baxter farm orchard would bear beautiful fruit. One tree especially, just to the east of the twelfth green, produced green and white apples that were extremely sweet. There were two trees between the fifteenth green and the sixteenth tee that had really fine red apples. Many a golfer or caddy had bad moments when they tried tossing a putter into the tree in hopes of knocking down a few apples only to have the club stay up in the tree. We also knew where there were blackberry bushes that were just the thing for a great snack. These were not boring times.

A Downer – the Depression is not to be ignored

Why write a downer chapter in what is supposed to be a light-hearted look at a happy young person who seemed to enjoy being a caddy? It is probably because life is not fair and things are what they are - not all nice. Just about every day, Maurice Roberge would come down to the shack carrying this big brown bag containing his lunch. Most of us thought, "Boy can this guy eat." Little did we know, for it was quite a while before we realized it, that he was feeding the "river rats," the kids that waded the creek searching for golf balls. These kids were hungry. Most of us had a sandwich, and if we did not have the coin for a soda there was always the pump at the ninth hole for some water. But these kids had no

sandwich and probably had not had breakfast either. These were the years of the Depression.

Once while sitting on the caddy bench under the tree, somebody asked a companion what kind of sandwich he had. The answer was "a pretend bologna". What was a pretend bologna? You put a little mustard on a slice of bread and you press another slice of bread very hard on top of it and you pretended there was some bologna in between. Not a happy remembrance.

A bad accident clouded the building of the new back nine holes in the late 1920s. I do not believe it was in the newspapers but the older caddies claim that it was true. A man setting dynamite to blast the rock ledges and level the area for the fourteenth hole, made a mistake, blew himself up and died.

Two other accidents occurred on the golf course in these early days. They involved a caddy and a man who worked on the course. Both were struck by golf balls and lost the sight in one of their eyes.

Caddies get a chance to play golf

Caddies were allowed to play golf on Mondays from six until ten in the morning. East Creek usually did a wondrous thing back in those days providing a heavy dew cover over the whole area each morning. This was grand for the golf course but not so good for the green keepers who had to use long bamboo sticks to whip off the dew so that the grass would be upright for cutting. The dew was also helpful to the caddies playing in the early light of dawn to find their golf balls by showing their path over the grass. A caddy that failed to get off the course by ten o'clock was not allowed to play on the next Monday.

Near the end of the year, before school started, a fine caddy tournament was held. We were placed into divisions according to our ability to play and prizes were awarded to the best finishers. Many of the downtown merchants donated merchandise and other members gave their old golf clubs that were awarded as prizes. In the late thirties the Rutland club would play home and away matches with some of the other clubs. On occasion some of the better playing caddies were invited to play on the Rutland team, especially on the away matches. Francis "Prutt" Lassar won the caddy championship in the very early thirties. He was also reputed to be a great barrel-jumping champ on the ice rinks in the area. Another young man, Donald Foye, was three under par late in the round during the finals of a match but had one bad hole and finished with a fine even par score.

A couple of times a year toward the end of the decade a bunch of caddies would go up to the Corn Hill links, pay the dollar green fee and play many rounds of golf on this nine hole course. Johnny Carmody was the Pro at the time. The pro shop was a shack near the road and hole number one was what is now the fifth hole at the fine eighteen-hole course at the Proctor-Pittsford club. We also made a couple of trips to the old Brandon course at the end of Park Street. The Killington Avenue bunch also had its own three-hole attempt at a course on Buffum's lot off Jackson Avenue. This was a natural area for a golf course with Moon Brook running through the large farm area. Once the grass grew it was not practical to

play there until the grass was mowed. Many of the fine golfers at the Rutland Country Club got their start as caddies and built their swings by emulating the better players for whom they had caddied. As caddies, they learned to appreciate the golf course and are among the best at replacing divots, raking traps and repairing ball marks on greens.

Two real good engagements

Some people, places and things are more vividly remembered because they were enjoyable or in other instances because they were just the opposite. Here are a couple of good times.

Bunny Cassidy and I as class B caddies were sent up to carry for a couple of out-of-towners. They turned out to be doctors from upstate New York vacationing at Lake Bomoseen. My player was Dr. Job and Bunny caddied for Dr. Everett. We had a good day. These were nice people, decent golfers who treated us like friends. I guess we liked the fact that they talked to us about golf, the weather, mountains, education and general things. It also helped that at the turn they treated us to sodas from the shack and, after the round, paid the going rate plus a generous tip. Naturally, we inquired if we could carry for them again. We were “engaged” and worked seven or eight times over the next two weeks. Being engaged meant that we did not have to arrive at the course until just before our starting time, much to the envy of the waiting unemployed caddies. Occasionally, on the back nine, they would let us hit balls pretending they had small wagers on what caddy would make the better shot.

Another memorable loop was when a party of eight guests arrived from Alexander Woollcott’s Lake Bomoseen hideaway. I caught a bag in the foursome that included Harpo Marx. We were halfway down the first fairway when Harpo noticed that a club had been left behind and sent his caddy to retrieve the club. When the boy could not find it, Harpo whistled in such a way as to direct the caddy to where the club was to be found. We were all impressed with his ability to almost talk with a whistle. It was a nice loop and when we finished the eighteenth hole, one of the guests paid us each three dollars minus the fifteen cent club tax which meant a two dollar eight-five cent take home. We did manage to become “engaged” and got one more loop from this group.

One unusual thing happened the second time we caddied for these guests. One of the players in the second foursome hit a bad shot on number sixteen and threw his iron deep into the woods on the left. Following the round all four of the caddies in that foursome took off on the run to try to recover the club. There were rumors that other celebrities from the Woollcott island cottage played our course but I was not involved.

One bad apple in the barrel

There were occasional times when all was not quite as nice as the two stories noted above. However the bad loops were very few and I can say that in all my years of being involved with the game of golf, I have met only a handful of people

that I did not like. One particular day I had a chance to carry for an out-of-town guest and thought that I was lucky until I grabbed onto his golf bag. It was a “trunk” with a thin strap. It contained an umbrella, was over the limit with clubs, shag balls, rain jacket and an extra pair of golf shoes. The guy was a loud mouth complainer who thought he was good but was lucky to break a hundred. After I helped him store the gear in his car, he paid me off with a ten-cent dimer tip. To this day I wish that I had given it back to him. Persons of this sort were few and far between. Maybe he grew up in his later life. In a later section you will see that most of the people involved with the game of golf are really “good guys”.

The golf professional – James Murray



RUTLAND COUNTRY CLUB - A CONTINUING TRADITION

Jim Murray

Jim Murray was in charge and did rule his area but he was also on the side of the caddies and would go to bat for you even against a member if you were right. There was a state tournament held at Rutland and I caught a fine golfer who was captain of the Norwich golf team. I worked for him a couple of rounds and he went home without paying me. I told the pro and within a week I had my money.

Jim was always trying to help the caddies with their golf game but he insisted that we use either the Vardon or the interlocking grip. I used the five finger or “baseball grip.” He tried to get me to change even after I became a member, but I could not seem to get comfortable with either of the preferred grips. To this day I wish that I had got started with one of the grips he taught.

I graduated from Mt. St. Joseph Academy in 1939 and dropped by to see Jim after having been away from caddying for a year. He was planning to go to Florida to run a driving range over the upcoming winter and asked me to go down and work with him. My parents did not think this was a good idea. Jim’s plans fell through and shortly the war changed everything. I understand that Jim went into wartime work, and returned after the war to again be golf professional at Rutland.

How I got my “A” badge

A new kid was always a C class caddy and would remain a “C” until he had put in two or three years as a caddy and/or grew a few inches. I managed to get my B badge and after a couple more years went to Head Pro Jim Murray and asked for a chance at making the A class.

Mr. Murray said, “You are too small.” I replied, “I can carry two bags.” So Mr. Murray said, “You can caddy for me this afternoon and I’ll see how you do.”



Caddy Badge

We started on the back nine and I felt that things were going well until we reached the second hole, a medium long par four where the pro hit a fine tee ball almost to the top of the hill. Mr. Murray then asked, "What is the club?" I responded "An eight iron." Mr. Murray countered, "It's a nine." But I insisted, "It's an eight." Mr. Murray firmly ordered, "Give me the nine iron." He then hit a fine shot that made the front of the green and he said, "See I told you it was a nine." I replied, "You hooded the iron." Mr. Murray responded, "You got your A badge."

Caddy education

There was no school for caddies. Most of us learned to caddy by observation or emulation. The head caddy, golf professional or assistant might give some verbal admonishments to a new boy or tell of a few things that caddies were or were not to do while working.

My older brother instructed me where to stand, to be out in front of my player, to watch all the balls that the players in our group hit, to mark where a ball crossed into a rough area and how to hold the pin [flag stick]. This helped but it was "on the job" where a kid learned to become a valued caddy.

The caddy shack was a beehive buzzing with information. Most of it was good stuff with a little bit not so good. A few guys would brag that their players never got a bad lie in the rough. I suppose that they had talented feet and were moving the ball. Most of these people had no love for the game. Hopefully they did not grow up to play golf. In my many years of playing golf, there have been less than a handful of participants who have been accused of cheating. When the new nine was opened the grass in the rough was higher than it is today and there were spots that would hide an errant shot. This made finding the ball difficult. The players would then ask the caddy how he marked the location of the ball. One new youngster stated that he marked it "by a bird, but the bird flew." Golf balls were expensive so a lost ball would call for a lineup, that is all players and caddies in the group line up in close order and march up and down the rough until the lost ball was found.

Strike – The caddies walk the picket line

The pay scale for caddies in the early 30s for eighteen holes was as follows: for C class 45 cents; for B class 50 cents; and for A class 60 cents. This remained pretty much the same until sometime in 1935 it was decided to charge an additional 15 cents for each time a player engaged a caddy for eighteen holes and 10 cents for nine holes. This additional fee was collected through the pro shop and was not

subtracted from the amount the caddy could expect. But it did heighten caddy awareness of the low rate of pay.

Right in the middle of the 1937 season the Vermont State ladies were scheduled to hold their championship tournament. A practice round was scheduled on a Monday. The caddies planned a strike and on that day they gathered fairly early at the entrance to the club to walk the picket line. Before the gathering, a few ladies and some early arriving caddies had started their play. Messengers were sent to the fifth tee to demand that the caddies drop their bags and join the strikers on the road in front of the clubhouse. Much to the dismay of the golfers the caddies complied.

A hurried call was made to some of the club officials and a gathering on the clubhouse porch ensued. The caddies choose Jack Quigley to be their representative. It seemed that the major problem was that the 15-cent fee was thought of as not being in the caddies' favor plus the fact that wages remained low. After a short meeting, the problem was resolved. The 15-cent charge was discontinued and the caddy rates were increased to the following scale: Class "C" would now receive 60 cents; class "B" 65 cents; and class "A" 75 cents. The caddies went back to work, the tournament went on, and the weather and the golf course were excellent.

Much ado about East Creek and the "bridges"

The Rutland Country Club property does not have a river running through it but the East Creek does bisect the golf course. This requires three walking bridges and an equipment bridge. Seventy years ago the three walking bridges were suspension bridges with heavy wire cable strung from pylon to pylon spanning the creek. These bridges allowed the golfers to cross at the fifth, seventh and tenth



ANGELA HINCHEY

One of the course swinging bridges.

holes and then back across at the eighteenth hole. The highest above the water of these bridges was the one crossing from the tenth green to the eleventh tee. Sometimes when the caddies were working for lady golfers, they would wait for the ladies to get to the middle of the bridge, then with one lad on one side and another on the other side they would rock the structure so that it would bounce. After a few complaints this practice was put on the forbidden list.

The red high-sided equipment bridge mentioned in the initiation section was wide enough for a tractor to cross. The other three bridges were fairly narrow and

used only for walking. There were no riding or pull carts in those days. In 1947 an over-spill on the Chittenden Dam up stream washed out a smaller dam located at East Pittsford and the “flood of 1947” wiped out all four of these bridges. The replacement bridges lasted until 2000 when three new steel bridges were lowered into place by helicopter. The covered bridge on Grove Street, called the “76 Bridge,” was destroyed at the same time. It is the dream of some members to have a replica of the covered “76 Bridge” placed on the present walking bridge at the eighteenth hole.

In the early days, East Creek was a great place to fish. Among the fine anglers who always got their limit from the stream were: Jack Fenton, Art Grace, Harry Kent, Ralph Piscopo, and Paul Hood. I am sure that there were many others who also enjoyed this sport. Fishing the creek all but ceased when another accident at Patch Dam caused yellow silt to fill the creek and its banks, killing just about all the fish and destroying the farm water pump at the ninth hole. Today one can see fish when crossing the walking bridges and spot an occasional person fishing the stream.

Comparing golf balls – then and now

Just about all of the brand name golf balls that were being used in the 1930s are not in use today. Possibly a few collectors have some of these oldies stored away. Many of the companies that produced balls back then are still in business today but the old names have been changed many times. Changing the names is a small thing in comparison with the many improvements and innovations that have altered the golf balls now in use. The thirties golf ball had a thin skin which would cut with any kind of mis-hit shot with an iron and even a poor shot with a wood would cut a ball through to the rubber, making it unfit for play. Some of the balls of those earlier days had a solid rubber core that made the ball heavier. Others had small liquid sacks filled with glue-like material. All were wound with a rubber thread under the cover.

Price-wise you could probably buy eight of the thirties balls for what you pay for the most expensive modern ball. Some names of the early golf balls were: Silver King; Spaulding Dot; Spaulding Dot-Dash-Dot; The Ugly Duckling Wright & Ditson; U.S. Nobby; and U.S. Royal. Dunlop had many different names for the balls they produced. The Ugly Duckling lasted only a short time. It had diamond shaped dimples. The Wright & Ditson ball had square dimples. The Penfold, which I believe was imported from Scotland, had a unique statue of a little man with a big head dressed for golf with a huge smile on his face and the statement on the pedestal he was standing on read “He Played a Penfold.”

East Creek is the body of water that separates the fifth tee from the fifth green. The edge of and the center of this nicely flowing stream was the work place for a few younger boys who were called “river rats.” These lads earned their money by retrieving any ball that did not manage to cross the creek. The usual fee for this service was twenty-five cents. These clever youngsters could tell if the errant ball

was an old used one, which was always returned for the service fee, or a “pearlie,” that is a brand new saver that they could sell for a larger amount than the service fee. Any attempt to sell golf balls found or retrieved by searching or wading the creek would have the banishment of “Down the Bloody Road” laid on them by the head professional. Another forbidden act was relieving the bag of a poor tipper of some of his play balls and hiding them on the course for retrieval after the loop. This was called “Bag Insurance.” I am happy to say that this was not very well thought of by most of the caddies.

As previously mentioned, the golf course was in the best condition of any of the courses in the state with the morning dew from the East Creek having a very nice effect on the fairways and the greens. No need to go to Ireland. But there were many places where a mis-hit ball could be temporarily lost.

The new eleventh fairway had a prolific growth of dandelion plants. It was not unusual in the early hours of a spring morning to see six or eight ladies in a row, bending down to cut the lush dandelion greens. After a year or so, you could not find a dandelion blossom anywhere near that fairway. Early on, some of the older caddies carried knives with which they would remove any broad leaf plant found on the new greens. The next time that you see a golfer who takes good care of the course, rakes traps properly, replaces divots, and does a great job repairing ball marks, more than likely he is a former caddy. “Go thou and do likewise.”

Big changes in golf clubs

Today golf clubs evolve rather quickly. Back in the 1930s there were a couple of changes of a major nature. Not only the material make up of the clubs changed but the names of both woods and irons changed to numbers. Prior to the thirties the shafts of golf clubs was made of wood. A player could get a great feel from a well-hit shot made with a wooden-shafted club. But while these clubs were not especially fragile, they did demand great care. Put away wet or improperly stored, they would eventually warp. Leather wrapped grips would come apart and sometimes a part of the shaft would come apart from the head of the iron. Wooden clubs had to be rewound where the head and the shaft connected. This winding job was not easy and was usually left for the golf professional or his assistant to accomplish. Just about the time that the wood shafts were being replaced with steel, the old Scotch names were being changed and replaced with numbers.

My memory is quite good but not wishing to leave to chance any doubts, I did write to the United States Golf Association for verification of how the names and numbers were applied. I was about 90 percent correct.

Their answer follows:

1 Iron-Driving Iron or Driving Cleek
3 Iron-Mid Mashie
5 Iron-Mashie
7 Iron-Mashie Niblick
Chipper-Jigger

2 Iron-Mid Iron
4 Iron-Mashie Iron
6 Iron-Spade Mashie
8/9 Iron-Niblick
Putter- Putting Cleek

[Note: "Cleck" is a generic word for an iron club]

1 Wood-Driver
3 Wood-Spoon

2 Wood-Brassie
Utility Wood-Baffy

Encounter with the caddie killer

I caught a loop with a foursome of local members and had been told to be careful because one of the group was a mean guy with a prior bad reputation. Older caddies claimed that this guy [to be unnamed] had given a caddy such a hard time for the first four holes, that the caddy tossed his bag off the fifth bridge into East Creek and then vacated the course via the Baxter Street exit.

Our group had no problem until we reached the tenth green. My player was John R. Canney and he was first on the green so it was my responsibility to handle the flag stick. When all the players were close to the hole, I removed the pin and took it well off the green. The "caddy killer" had a short putt. He missed it, claiming that I had moved and caused him to miss the putt. He threw his putter, which landed in a sand trap, and yelled at me to go get his club. Mr. Canney told me to leave his club where it was and for the guy to get his own club. He said that I had not moved but he had just missed the short putt. The rest of the round was uneventful.

Groupie caddies and the big bands

Most of the time it was pleasant around the shack. Usually a radio was playing and the caddies all had their favorite tunes. The depression was still on in 1937 and 1938 but the economy was better than it was in the early thirties. It was not unusual for an "A" caddy to have a whole dollar to take home after an 18-hole loop. If there was enough food in the house and he had saved a little for clothes and schoolbooks, he would have a little bit to spend at the Rutland State Fair. In the summer, two dollars would get a guy into The Casino at Lake Bomoseen. The talk around the shack was who might be making the trip and what band was playing. Some of the favorites were: Glenn Miller; Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey; Vaughn Monroe; Claude Thornhill; and Ina Rae Hutton and her all-girl band of renown.

Most guys would bum or "hitchhike" to the lake. Others might tag along with a guy who might manage to get a car to bring a carfull to the dance. Sonny Perkins had the use of a car for the visit of one particular band. I do not remember which band was playing but I believe it was either Vaughn Monroe or Jimmy Dorsey. Sonny was a singer and managed to get up on the stage and in front of the mike to do his rendition of the song "Tangerine". The report was that it went quite well and Sonny had had his fifteen minutes in the spotlight. There was much conversation around the shack regarding Sonny's great success. Some of the older guys even ventured to Burlington to Malletts Bay to dance to the big bands.

Some of the more popular songs of the times were silly like "Three little fishies in an itty bitty pool". The "Big Apple" was the dance along with "Susy Q" and "Truckin' on down." Some of the show-off caddies that caught an early loop

would be well in advance of their players coming in on the home hole and would hold up one finger and pretend to be “Truckin’ on down” to finish up the round.

Good loops and nice rides home

As a young kid I opened doors at Christmas time for both Frank Mowrey, proprietor of F. B. Howard Jewelry, and Carleton Wilson of the Wilson Clothing Company. Later on when I caught a loop for either of these men it was a pleasure. Just about all the locals were easy loops. Space will not allow naming all the good guys so I will name a few and any one who is overlooked can add his own name to the list. Among the good loops there were: Dr. Harry Ryan, Sr., Dr. Pond, Steve Dorsey, Fred Roberts, Rolo deFrancisco, Fritz Burnham, Fritz Metzger, Bill Allen, Dr. Ralph Seeley, the two Drs. Bellrose, Lou Snyder, and Ted Nicolette. Most locals would tour the 18 holes in three hours or less but Clayton Kinney and Edwin “Racehorse” Lawrence, if they had caddies who could keep up, would cut a lot of time from that figure. Bishop Joyce, who played left-handed, and Monsignor John Kennedy were occasional visitors. Two out-of-towners who were good loops were Leo Kearns from New York City and Judge Russell from Albany. Secretary of the Navy Franke, who had a house just down the street from the Country Club, was also an occasional visitor.

All of the ladies were nice loops. To name a few there were: Mrs. H. B. Jones, Virginia Pierce Smith, Charlotte Fletcher, Tessie Tauzig, Hilda Ginsberg, Edna Appell, and Mrs. Manning.



RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The “porte-cochere.”

A ride towards home after a day of caddy-ing was a large treat. The lads would hang out near the entrance to the club or under the “porte-cochere” hoping to hitch a ride “over the hill” up Field Avenue or even downtown. Mr. George Raymond and Mr. Jim Gill were not only two nice loops but they were nice people. These men were connected to the mills in Ludlow and were always willing to give the kids a ride, all the way to Killington Avenue. Other good “over the hill” rides were: John Canney, Frank Connell, Joe Kudera, Lou Snyder and Mr. Woodfin.

The old clubhouse

Currently there is a new clubhouse at the Rutland Country Club. Memories of the old clubhouse in use in the 1930s, from the view of a caddy, would be mostly of the outside of the structure. A large porch with a white spindle railing dominated the south side of the clubhouse. It was a quite large area that held a good number of high-backed rocking chairs. The porch was shaded by a number of trees and gave a great view of the first tee, the tennis court and the putting green. Just in front of the tennis court was a large bench where the caddies that had been called up from the shack would wait to be assigned to work for a player

and tote a golf bag to the first tee. The north side of the building boasted a “porte-cochere” [an open covered entry to both the porch and the clubhouse]. In bad weather caddies would wait under this structure in hopes of catching a ride towards home. Late in the day when the shack was closed, a kid might be able to buy a coke or a sandwich at the kitchen door.



RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The spacious veranda of the clubhouse as it was in the 1930s.

Appendix:

People

The head golf professional prior to the arrival of James Murray was Tom Reilly. Francis Webster was Pro Shop Assistant to Mr. Murray when I arrived in 1931. Hubert Gauthier replaced Webster a few years later. The head caddy before Ed Cassidy was Reggie Lorman. The Superintendent of the golf course when I arrived in 1931 was Herb Gillam. His son Herb Jr. was the chief mechanic. These two fine gentlemen were stolen away by The Ekwanok Country Club in the mid-1930s. Dick Berry took over as Superintendent and carried on until after the war when he retired. Clovis Webster, who had been a caddy in the late 1930s, replaced Berry. Following Ed Cassidy as head caddy were Larry Cassidy, Earl Houston and Glen Houston. For a period of about two and a half weeks, late in August, I, John McDonough covered as head caddy while Glen Houston went to graduate school at Castleton State College.

The following is a list of caddies on the scene in the 1930s. If I have not included some people or misspelled names, it was not intentional and I do apologize:

Red Rogers	Larry Cassidy	Glen Houston
Crawf Taylor	Ray Kantor	Dick Batchelder
Bill Savage	Andy Salomka	“Gas” Tozi
Carl Waterlund	Henry Grupe	Dick Trombley

Francis "Prutt" Lessor	Earl Houston	Henry Lessor
Iron Chioffi	Dick "Grubby" Lessor	Gail Rounds
Ray Catozzi	Vern Rounds	Irving Gelvan
Vince Shappy	Alabama	Tennessee
Bob "Put me in" Blais	Charlie LaRock	Bill Pie
Bob Teachout	Dick Neary	Bob LaFlamme
Whitey Torvineau	Don Moore	Joe McDonough
Jiggy Moore	Marty McDonough	Bob Bird
Sonny Perkins	Frank Hodar	Ralph Piscopo
Jack Quigley	Ed Pray	Pershing Foye
Don Foye	Bunny Cassidy	Ron Fucci
Larry Mathews	Ron Mathews	Ed Ryan
Tom Ryan	John McDonough	Frank Thomas
Cowboy Thomas	Jim Hess	Sam Hayward
Jim Canary	Dick O'Neil	George Walsh
Bob Bartlett	Paul Duffy	Jim Dervin
Hink Carroll	Quiver Webster	Dick Carroll
Meade Gelvan	Clovis Webster	Jack Joyce
Chub Pray	Paul Hood	Al "Bugga" Flory
Stan Kantorski	Bill Flory	Francis "Cider" Holden
Oscar Watterlund	"Bucko" Barrett	John Barrett
Eddie Carroll	Francis Carroll	

The names entered as Tennessee and Alabama were transients possibly temporarily in town trying to pick up a few coins and move on down the road.

Epilogue

Way back at the start of this effort, the question was: "The Best or the Worst of Times"?

It was true that many kids needed money during those years. The fact that they were exposed to the game of golf and to the nice people who played the game was worth much more than the coin they earned while caddying. Some of the benefits of caddying were not obvious to the kids that toted golf bags. In retrospect, I became aware that in addition to learning to love the game of golf, being a caddy helped me to grow in many ways - educationally, socially and even physically.

So even though as caddies, we were not financially well off, for me it may well have been "The Best of Times."

John W. McDonough

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